

BMAP NEWS



BMAP
BLUE MOUNDS AREA PROJECT

Conservation and Community. Together.

Spring 2022 • Volume 25 Number 1

Winter Lecture Series Reviews

Attracting Eastern Bluebirds and Other Cavity Nesters

Patrick Ready, Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin

Aldo Leopold wrote, "A rare bird or flower need remain no rarer than the people willing to venture their skills in building it a habitat." This quote became a guiding principle for Patrick Ready more than 20 years ago when he was asked to take over the bluebird trail at Lake Kegonsa State Park. Member, newsletter editor, and past president of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW), Ready now manages nine trails in Dane County and has fledged over a thousand bluebirds from his trails.

Ready shared his experience in the first 2022 BMAP Conservation Conversation, *Attracting Eastern Bluebirds and Other Cavity Nesters* January 20.

"Bluebirds are native to North America, but their numbers dropped for hundreds of years as bluebird habitat fell before agricultural development," said Ready. Wooden fence posts around fields provided great nesting cavities near the insects

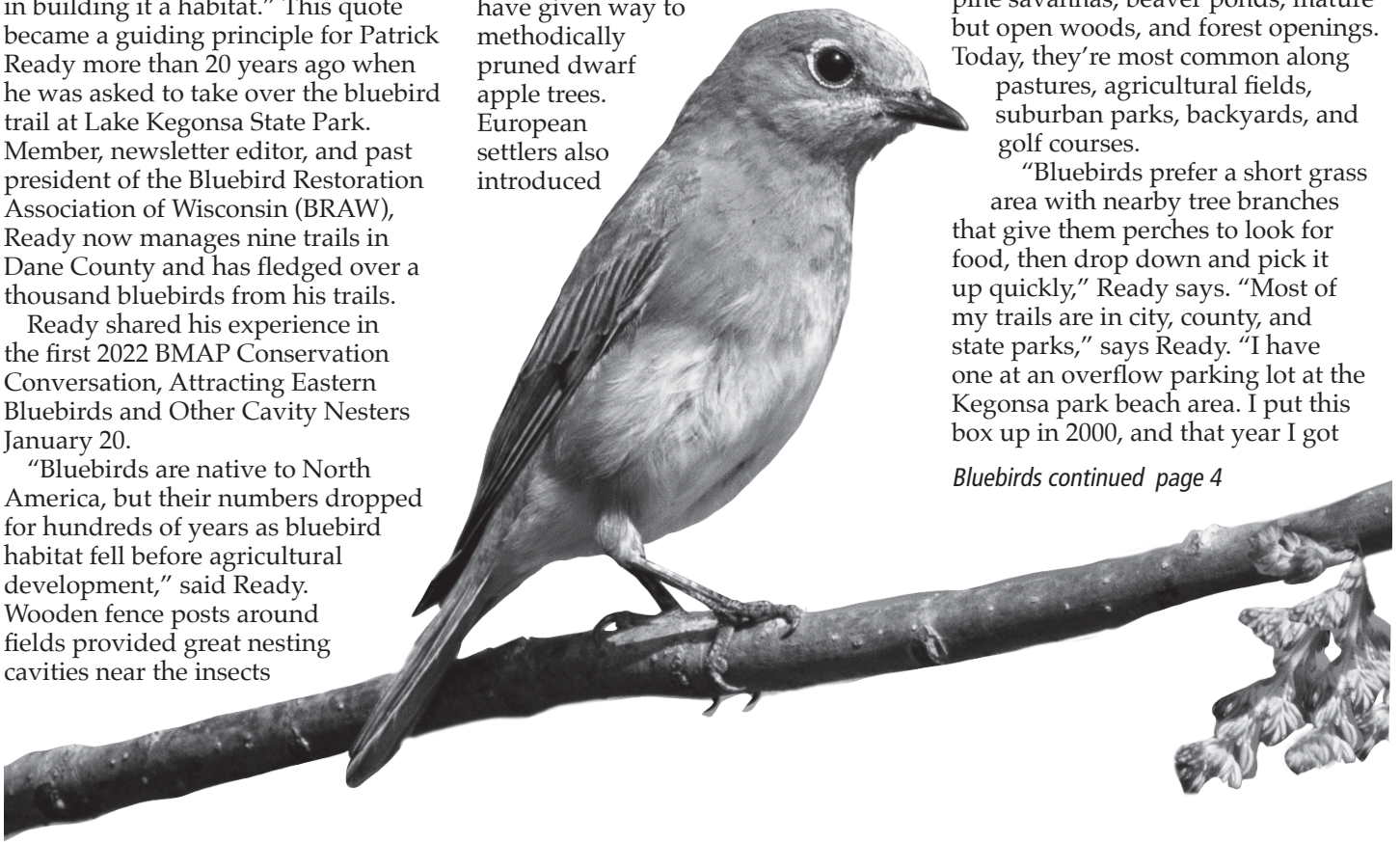
they eat, but farmers have replaced them with metal poles. Likewise, the tall apple trees in early orchards have given way to methodically pruned dwarf apple trees. European settlers also introduced

aggressive European Starlings and House Sparrows who like the same type of nesting cavity and ruthlessly outcompete the gentler bluebirds for these sites. Fortunately, bluebird numbers have rebounded as Ready and an army of bluebird guardians began building houses and monitoring them.

According to The Cornell Lab, Eastern Bluebirds live in open country around trees, but with little understory and sparse ground cover. Original habitats probably included open, frequently burned pine savannas, beaver ponds, mature but open woods, and forest openings. Today, they're most common along pastures, agricultural fields, suburban parks, backyards, and golf courses.

"Bluebirds prefer a short grass area with nearby tree branches that give them perches to look for food, then drop down and pick it up quickly," Ready says. "Most of my trails are in city, county, and state parks," says Ready. "I have one at an overflow parking lot at the Kegonsa park beach area. I put this box up in 2000, and that year I got

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Joshua Cotton/Unsplash

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greg Jones

Hello, BMAP members and other readers. I'm excited to be serving as the new BMAP president.

The first thing I want to do is to thank our past president, Doug Hansmann, who worked tirelessly for us during his

time here. In addition to conducting BMAP's business as our president, he co-edited our newsletter. We all owe him a debt of gratitude. I would also like to give a shout-out to his wife, Denise Thornton. Denise was the other co-editor of the newsletter and worked in tandem with Doug writing articles, editing, and helping with the layout work. Thank you to both Doug and Denise for a job well done.

Next, I would like to thank Jim Bennet for his service and wish him well in his other endeavors. Jim served on the BMAP board, helped with our finances, and assisted us with our new logo design (yeah, that's right, we have a new logo!).

We have also been very fortunate to find a new editor for the newsletter—please welcome Jenn Chakravorty. I think she is very talented and will do a great job with the newsletter. The proof is in your hands right now.

Further, I would like to welcome our newest board member and communications chairperson Brooke Lewis to the board of directors. Brooke has been editing and posting on our Facebook page for a couple of years now. We are happy to have her step up to her new role and look forward to working with her (I think we may get some technical help for those of us who can find new technology challenging!).

As the events chairperson for the past 2-3 years, I know firsthand how challenging things have been with the Covid pandemic. As you know, our "Winter Conservation Conversations" have been held online through Zoom. While we were able to get the body of the talks out there for you to hear, we missed out on a lot. As I'm sure you know, much of the value of the winter lectures is in getting together. I have had many valuable conversations at these events in the past. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we haven't had a chance to touch base with old friends and hear what they have been doing on their properties or to make new friends, and that saddens me.

Fortunately, we have a whole slate of in-person events scheduled for this spring, summer, and fall. These events will all be outdoors, live, and in-person, and I hope to catch up with many of you in the months to come. 🌍

ECOLOGIST'S REPORT



Micah Kloppeburg

This April and May it feels especially vital to soak in the greenery of renewal that our spring ephemerals bring. While some of these plants are not "true" ephemerals, I delight in

them all: Hepatica, rue and false rue anemone, both species of *Uvularia*, trilliums, bloodroot, *Mertensia*, trout lilies, Dutchman's Breeches, toothwort, *Claytonia*, marsh marigold, and oh so many more. Their greenery portends a vigorous future, for the summer that rounds the corner is a vision of vegetation: tree canopies thick with leaves and prairies dense with grasses.

Our ephemeral flowers also help signal the awakening of invertebrate life, fulfilling the nectar needs of many a bee, fly, and gnat before the budding tree canopy shifts from

dappled sun to dense shade: with oaks and walnuts among the last to leaf out. As insects mobilize to feast on the floral riches and succulent greenery of new leaves, migratory birds sweep into the woodlands to replenish their own nutrient stores. The energy from leaf-fattened larvae supports many a bird's successful nesting or continued migration.

Spring sets in motion a locus of ecological movement predicate on plant buds and blooms. Like our spring display, I'm excited to continue my own conservation story: a story that began with plants and now will naturally branch out to pollinators and other inverts. After nearly 4 years working as the BMAP Ecologist, I am humbled to share with you all that this will be my last Ecologist Report for the BMAP Newsletter. Earlier this March, I accepted a new position with the Xerces Society as their first Wisconsin Pollinator Conservation Specialist.

I am incredibly grateful and proud to have served as the BMAP Ecologist since April of 2018. I have fully enjoyed my work both in the

field conducting site visits across many of our members' properties and also at the computer planning out new membership engagement opportunities. I am thankful that BMAP allowed me to grow into the community conservation professional I am today and that I have supported (and been supported by) the incredible dedication of our BMAP membership to restoring and protecting native habitat on private lands across southern WI.

While I have phased out of my primary duties, I am fully committed to supporting the transition over to the next BMAP Ecologist who I am sure will be well positioned to continue BMAP's legacy of excellent Ecologists: including Amy Alstad, Corey Raimond, Cindy Becker, and many more. The good news is that, like those BMAP Ecologists before me, I'm not moving far and, in fact, I'm not moving at all. I hope I and the Xerces Society can be one more fantastic land stewardship resource for the BMAP membership. See you all in the field! 🌍



The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund's Seed A Legacy Pollinator Habitat Program

One out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of pollinators. This includes many fruits, vegetables, and seeds. Pollinators are not only necessary for our own food, but also for native wildlife. Wisconsin projects serve a critical role in addressing the National Pollinator Partnership Action Plan goals because of the location on the Monarch's migratory path.

We'd like to introduce a program that you can take advantage of to help pollinators & monarch butterflies. The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund's (BBHF) pollinator habitat program called Seed A Legacy provides free or highly reduced cost seed to landowners for developing a minimum of 2 acres of pollinator habitat. This high-quality pollinator habitat helps ensure that honeybee and Monarch butterfly populations thrive. The

Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund is dedicated to the establishment of high-quality pollinator habitat to

ensure that pollinator populations thrive. We work with private, public, and corporate land managers to design and build healthy and sustainable pollinator

habitat. Pollinator populations are experiencing critical population declines. Monarch butterfly populations have declined by 80% over the past 20 years, honeybee hive losses top 40% annually, and in 2017 the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee was listed as an endangered species.

"The Seed A Legacy program offers a unique opportunity to get high quality pollinator habitat on the landscape in a critical location of the country," says Chip Taylor, Director of Monarch Watch. "Establishing pollinator habitat is one of the most impactful ways that people can benefit monarch butterflies and other important pollinator species."


The process is simple, apply online at www.beeandbutterflyfund.org. Here you can also find lots of resources and advice on preparing for, creating, and maintaining healthy pollinator habitat. Proper site preparation

(eliminating ALL vegetation for a least one growing season) is the most critical element of a successful project. If you use site preparation like a soybean crop, your site should be ready within one growing season for a dormant season broadcast planting in December. You'll be broadcasting half of the site to a honeybee clover mix and the other half to a Monarch mixture, which contains 60+ wildflower species. Mixture descriptions and pollinator value scores can be found on the website as well. By planting two separate mixtures, you will be providing abundant, lush, and dense forage with the clover mix, which can also be used as a prescribed fire break. The Monarch mix contains slower growing wildflowers that will provide nectar resources for monarchs and other pollinators, also providing places for monarchs to lay eggs.

The first season of growth will probably be a bit weedy, this is normal. The first year, the native plants will be growing roots and you won't see much above 4-5 inches. This is when mowing to reduce the weed load is very important, so you'll plan to bushhog the site 3-4 times the first spring and summer. The second growing season will be when you start to see a few blooms from early establishers. During your third growing season, you should see a lot of different blooming plants. The seed mixtures are custom designed to include species that bloom at different times and have

various colors and flower shapes.

The BBHF believes that everyone can do something positive for our struggling pollinators. If you

don't have the space for the Seed A Legacy program, you can plant pollinator friendly natives in your yard which should include common milkweed or swamp milkweed. You can also donate to Gifts that Grow at www.beeandbutterflyfund.org to support other local projects. 



The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund

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Christos Gavriel/Unsplash

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Winter Lecture Series Reviews

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three different nestings of bluebirds, and they fledged fifteen birds in one season from that one box." However, the next year he had two or three pairs of bluebirds that competed for the same next box. Because they consistently removed each other's eggs and rebuilt the nest, he only had three fledglings survive that season.

Monitoring the nesting boxes is crucial and can save the day. While monitoring another box at Lake Kegonsa, Ready found that tree swallows had moved into a nest box before the young bluebirds had fledged. "I found one swallow egg, a dead blue bird, and one bluebird chick. I took the chick out and put it in another next box on the trail with live chicks about the same

had really good spring weather and a steady increase in bluebirds," said Ready. He noted that bad weather can have the opposite effect. "Bluebirds usually start nesting in April, but in 2012, I found three pairs of bluebirds had eggs in their nest by March 30," Ready remembered. "Statewide, most monitors were reporting triple nests, and our members reported well over 35,000 bluebirds fledged that year. But last year it was under 10,000 because

of a massive cold spell across the southern states where bluebirds migrate."

Bluebirds do not leave the country in winter—they only go as far south as they need to find mild winter

weather. According to the Minneapolis Star Tribune, hundreds of thousands of Eastern bluebirds died in February 2021 during harsh

weather to the south of us. Snow, ice, and cold weather killed bluebirds and other early migrants in a wide swath from Oklahoma to the East Coast. Reports from newspapers throughout that area say Eastern Bluebirds and other early spring migrants froze or died from lack of food and water.

Ready noted that he didn't see bluebirds last year until around mid-May. "A lot of my boxes that usually have two broods only had one," he said.

"The negative side of monitoring is not every bluebird makes it. Because they are migrating birds, 55% of the fledged bluebirds die before their first nest attempt."

Ready has advice for people who want to help bluebirds survive. The BRAW website has instructions on how to build a bluebird box:

- Place the box in an open area with morning sun. Birds start nesting in May, and the sun helps keep the nest warm during cold nights.
- Mount the box on a metal post 5-6' above ground. Bluebirds can



Patrice Bouchard/Unsplash

age," Ready says. "I went back the next day, and she did survive." Ready recommends monitoring each box about once a week. "You can check to see if there is a nest, what species, how many egg and watch the development of the chicks in the box," he says. "When you open the box, and the female is sitting on the eggs, she may sit still or panic and fly out. You will see blue eggs a little smaller than robin's eggs. Don't be surprised if you see a white egg. About five percent of bluebirds don't have the ability to color their eggs blue. Collect the data for each box throughout several seasons, and in August or September, send the data for all cavity nesters in, so we can keep an eye on what's going on."

Ready reports his data to the Madison Audubon Society and BRAW. He says www.braw.org is an excellent resource to learn more about bluebirds. You can find annual bluebird population numbers going back to 1996. "From 2001 to 2006, we

Bluebirds continued page 5



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nest up to 20 feet in the air, but this height was chosen because it's easy for humans to monitor.

- Face the entrance to the South or Southeast—away from prevailing winds.
- Space additional boxes about 100 yards apart to give the birds the one-acre space they need to find food without competing.
- Position the nest box with a tree 20 feet or less so the young ones have someplace to fly to that is protected from cats, dogs, and other predators.
- Predator guards can be useful to repel raccoons and cats. A metal cylinder available at bird food stores keeps them from climbing the pole or a Noel Predator Guard provides a screen extension around the entrance.

"House sparrows are the number one problem for bluebirds today," Ready said. "They are a non-native species that by itself has set back the bluebird population quite a bit, and they are very difficult to get rid of. If you remove their nests, they will keep rebuilding for five to six weeks, and then you are halfway through the summer before you get a chance to attract bluebirds. House sparrows destroy bluebird eggs and kill both young and adults."

Ready suggests using a banner trap. "When the house sparrow goes in, it trips the lock and closes the entrance. You can put a plastic bag over the box and open the back. When the sparrow flies into the plastic bag, it's up to you what to do with it," said Ready. "Since I have been protecting bluebirds, I have a poor attitude toward house sparrows. When you attract bluebirds to a nest box in your yard, you can feed them mealworms and give them water," Ready said. "It's a great way to watch them. The parents will take their children right to the feeder and birdbath. Like robins (to whom they are related) they live to bathe—especially when they are right out of the nest."

"Make sure your bluebird boxes are ready to go by March 1," said Ready. "Clear any old nest material with a paint brush—just make sure you are not downwind and breathing the dust when you do. Do not spray the box with cleaners. Bluebird parents keep the box clean and make sure there is nothing in the box that will harm the next generation." 🌱

BY DENISE THORNTON

BMAPNEWS

New BMAP Logo

Recently, the board decided it was time to update our logo. Tom Senatori, of Tom Senatori Designs, volunteered to help us out and initially provided us with eight different designs to choose from. Several tweaks later, the logo shown at right and on our website was chosen unanimously by the board.

The logo bears a leaf from the bur oak tree—one of the most majestic, sturdy, and oldest trees around the Blue Mounds area. In fact, you might recall that our coveted yearly award for good land stewardship is called the Bur Oak award. The horizon of the Niagara dolomite-capped Blue Mound that stands hundreds of feet above the surrounding land is visible within the bur oak leaf. We're so thankful for Tom's help with this process and look forward to using this logo for years to come! 🌱

BY GREG JONES



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The Driftless Reader, a Book Celebrating Our Special Place

We all know that the Blue Mounds area is a special place. But did you know that it is part of a larger, unique region called the “Driftless Area” which has drawn and inspired people for centuries? During the February 17th, 2022 BMAP Conservation Conversation, Curt Meine, a well-known biologist and writer affiliated with the Aldo Leopold Foundation, Center for Humans and Nature, International Crane Foundation and UW-Madison, shared some brief excerpts from *The Driftless Reader* and explained how the idea for the book originated and came to fruition. *The Driftless Reader* was edited by Curt Meine and Keefe Keeley and published in 2017.

The term “Driftless Area” was used as early as 1883 by T. C. Chamberlin who described “a large area in the southwestern portion of Wisconsin which bears no evidence of having suffered glaciation and hence has been designated The Driftless Area” (*Geology of Wisconsin, Survey of 1873-1879*). Meine, who lives in the Driftless Area and is a prolific student of Wisconsin’s natural and cultural environment, was struck by the depth and diversity of the many writings, maps and images generated about the Driftless Area for centuries, some by well known voices, others less so, but all clearly greatly impacted by this distinctive place. This realization prompted Meine and his colleague, Keefe Keeley (also a Driftless native) to compile a number of these pieces into *The Driftless Reader* to recognize the area’s unique geology and honor its rich history and the Native peoples

who first inhabited this land. Meine and Keeley also wanted to “encourage readers within the Driftless Area to value this shared landscape, and to work to protect, regenerate,

and sustain its ecological health, its human communities and its local economies” (quote from the preface of *The Driftless Reader*).

Even though the book runs over 300 pages, one of the most difficult challenges Meine and Keeley faced was selecting which of the abundant writings and images to include. They made their decisions based on “some combination of

historic significance, evocative prose, useful insight, vital perspective, breadth of expression, literary genre and serendipity.” During the virtual lecture, Meine shared a varied selection of some of his favorite excerpts, including some especially appropriate for BMAP. Here are a few examples Meine shared during the lecture:

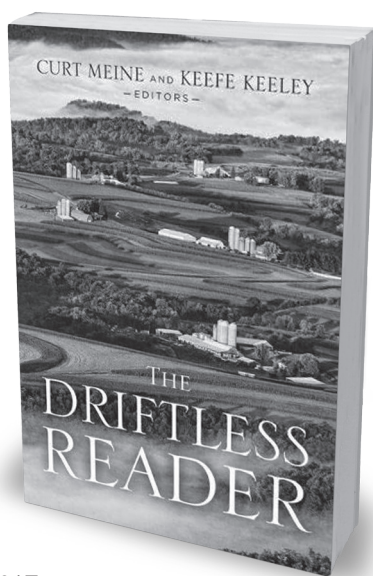
- “Incidents of a Journey from Pennsylvania to Wisconsin Territory (1837)” in which William R. Smith, traveling along the Military Ridge area near Mineral Point, describes the beauty of the native tall grass prairie but also notes the emergence of more and more white settlers and the Native Americans being pushed out of the area.
- Stories of Wisconsin women from the Richland Center area who were

some of the first leaders of the suffragist movement in the mid 1850’s.

- “Macaja Revels Camped at a Stream of Water”, by Madison poet laureate Fabu, a 2013 poem about the mid-nineteenth century former slaves and free black settlers who established several African American communities in the Driftless area.
- A poem called “Getting to Black Earth” (2013) by Patricia Monaghan (co-founder of the Black Earth Institute) which reflects on the geological history of the lower Wisconsin River and ends with the line “Start with ocean. End with Black Earth.”
- Letters from a young Civil War soldier who was initially sent to Fort Snelling in St Paul to await assignment to suppress a possible Sioux uprising in which he questions the morality of the “Indian Wars” and recalls how his family was befriended by the local Indians when they settled in Buffalo County.
- Excerpts from “Old Prairie du Chien” (1931), a limited edition of collected poems by Sauk Prairie poet Laura Sherry (Meine was fortunate to get one of the 300 copies published).
- “Old Man Fishing”, a poem by August Derleth (a Sauk City resident) in which he muses about the history passing before him on the Lower Wisconsin River from early explorers and Native Americans to Bob LaFollette.

Meine ended his presentation with a challenge for us all. He read a beautiful short poem by Kathe Davis writing about living in the Kickapoo Valley area called “Things I Love About Where I Am” (2012) and then asked each of us to think deeply about what we love about where we live and then work to preserve that special place. And especially fitting for BMAP, *The Driftless Reader*’s dedication reads... “For all those working on behalf of healthy human and natural communities in the Driftless Area.” *The Driftless Reader* is a gem—as rich, diverse and special as the Driftless area itself—and well worth reading. It is available through UW Press and at local bookstores. 🌍

BY KRISTINE EUCLIDE





The Journey from Abandoned Farm to a State Natural Area

On February 3, Kathie Brock charted her and her husband, Tom Brock's journey from new landowners with an intuitive feeling that it would be good for them and their children to get out into nature, to restoring the landscape to one of Wisconsin's outstanding examples of the vanishing savanna habitat.

Brock began her story with aerial photos from 1937, the first year such photos were taken of the area. Their property included a high ridge that in 1937 was open land dotted with trees. Its south-facing slope was lightly grazed and partly open. But by the time the Brocks bought the land in 1980, it had all become covered with brush.

Brock attended a work party organized by The Nature Conservancy, where she helped saw down cedars and cut brush in 1995. "I thought, our land looks like that, and I can do the same. Our land had a small remnant of prairie left, and the ridge top had oaks, though you couldn't see them because of the brushy vegetation," she said.

She started in the prairie. "I took a bow saw up there and sawed down a cedar, rolled it down the hill, cut it up and burned it. That was a day's hard work—removing one tree—and it became clear to me that to get an appreciable amount of clearing done, I was going to need help." That fall, they hired four young people who cut and treated all the junk on the south-facing slope and dragged everything down to the ditch," said Brock. "A Town of Vermont crew came along and offered to chip what we dragged down. We paid them but it was a fraction of the value." A neighbor used the wood chips for mulch.

After another season of the same, they moved on, and burned the brush piles higher up the hillside.

Amid the invasives, they would see some native plants, so they started burning to remove debris and free native plants to the sun in 1998. "It didn't burn well," Brock recalled. "Heavy use of the drip torch did help, and it was the beginning of regrowth of prairie seed and small plants that had survived all those years."

"We burned 150 piles of brush in the heavily infested white oak savanna in one winter. Burning brush piles in winter is a lot of fun and keeps you warm while getting rid of debris," Brock said. After that they burned the savanna area to keep it clear. They did protect some birches growing there from fire because they are good bird habitat and a favorite of Brock's.

Trading firewood for labor, they removed red and black oaks that their neighbor cut and split. Other trees that are valuable but don't belong in an oak savanna, such as black walnuts, were pulled down

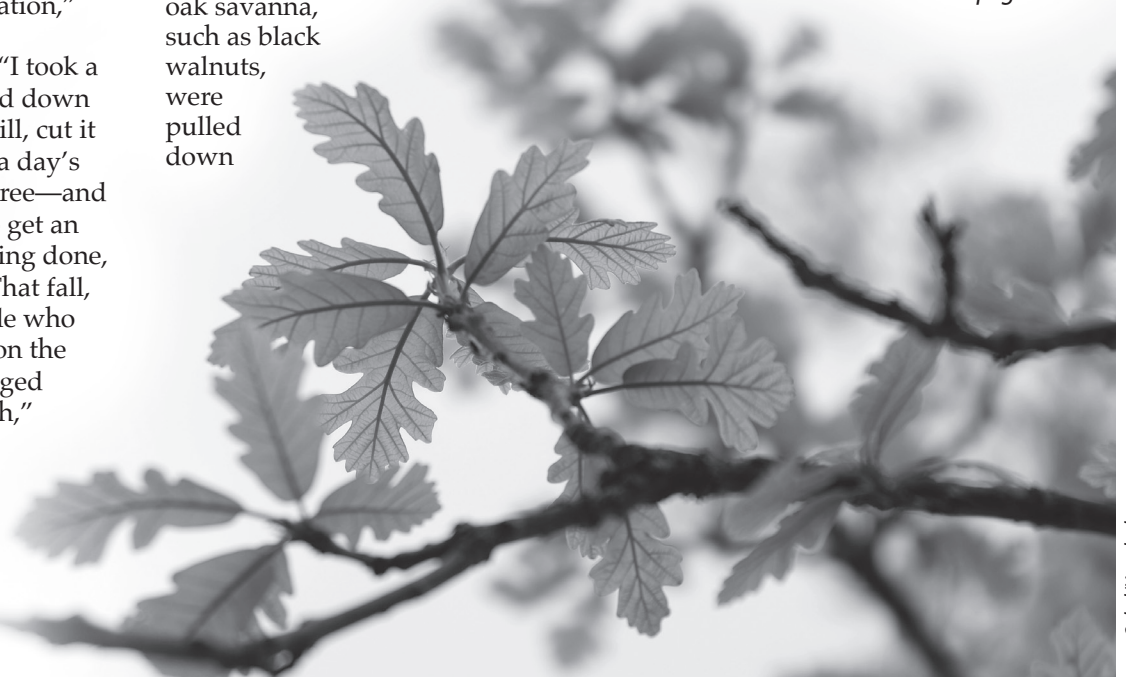
to the road and taken one-by-one to Aldo Leopold's granddaughter's place. They ended up as furniture in the new Aldo Leopold Center in Baraboo. Walnuts, Brock added, resprout, and that's a problem. "Before the sprouts green up, cut and treat them for a few years. You will beat them."

"Another tree you want to deal with is Aspen," said Brock. They grow in clones. If you cut them, they respond by sending out runners and come back with even more trees. You need to girdle them by peeling off a round of outer bark and cambium so they can't send nutrients from the upper part of the tree down to the roots. It takes more than a year, but it will die. We probably girdled a thousand aspens all over our property." Of course, the invasives that are cut grow again. "A basal bark application of herbicide works well. They don't give up easily."

Brock said that, aside from spring ephemerals, a good rule of thumb is: If it's green in early spring—it's not good. "Prairie plants tend to be warm season plants and by June or July, they grow very well, but grasses that grow in early spring, such as brome and quack grass must be dealt with.

1. Interseed - put prairie seed in there, and eventually they will be competition for the brome.
2. Herbicide - when the invasive grass is four inches tall, you can spray it with a low concentration of Roundup. "It only kills green stuff,

State Natural Area continued page 8



and it worked well," Brock said.

Later in the season, you get rid of the brush and resprouts. "One person cuts shrubs with a weed wacker, and several people follow and treat every stem," said Brock. "It doesn't remove them in one go, but it slowly improves over the years. We have pretty good control of brush in this area. It's very labor intensive, but very effective."

The Brocks inherited a lot of weeds from early farming and the following neglect. With sweet clover and wild parsnip, they went after the taproots. "We were part of an intern program of college kids in restoration ecology programs using parsnip predator shovels to cut the roots. These are biennials. They only set seed in their second year, so killing them before they set seed is effective."

"Sweet clover can remain viable in the soil for 80 years," Brock warned. "But if you persist, you will get ahead. You are in it for the long haul."

Many thistles are biennials and easy to get rid of, but Canada thistle is perennial and sends out runners. "The

best way we found to get rid of large infestations is to mow them just after flowering season but well before seed formation," Brock said. "This reduces them well. It may have to be done more than once in the same season and in recurring seasons. When you are down to a few plants, you can get them with a backpack application of herbicide."

Reed canary grass is another challenge. "If you don't like herbicide, then you should learn to like reed canary grass," said Brock. "The same goes for buckthorn, goldenrod and sweet clover. You don't have to spray them in a broad area, and the collateral damage is small compared to the advantage of getting rid of non-native and invasive plants."

The Brocks learned how to identify native plants and collect their seeds. "We wanted to plant prairie in the former fields to stop erosion." In one field reverted to farm grasses and

weeds, the field was herbicided and everything green was killed. Then it was planted with prairie seed in November 1999 with the help of friends. "The first growing season, the non-native plants come up from the seed bank in the soil. The prairie seeds are there, but they are only an inch or two tall. A neighbor mowed the non-natives to a six-inch height. That way the sun got to the prairie plants. You generally mow a new prairie planting about once a month—at least two or three times during the summer to give the prairie plants a good start.

For plants that are very rare or need extra care,

Brock chooses to start as seedlings to give them a better chance. She found some purple milkweed, which is state endangered. "It's a savanna specialist and needs both sun and shade. Brock collected some seed pods, started them in a flat, transplanted into deep tube pots for the taproots."

"Some researchers cored some of the oaks to learn their age, and the oldest trees we have go back to 1736. Those trees have been growing on our ridge right where they are now since well before any European settlement here." Brock noted that Aldo Leopold said, "He who owns a bur oak owns more than a tree. He owns a historical library and a reserved seat in the theater of evolution." The Brocks have saved us all a front-row seat to one of the rarest ecosystems on earth.

The steady and determined restoration work of the Brocks and those who helped them resulted in the dedication of their land as Pleasant Valley Conservancy State Natural Area No. 551 June 7, 2008. State natural areas (SNAs) protect outstanding examples of Wisconsin's native landscape of natural communities, significant geological formations, and archeological sites. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources gives the savanna ecosystem a Global rating of G1—critically imperiled globally because of its extreme rarity.

You can learn more about Pleasant Valley Conservancy and find a rich resource on restoration techniques at pleasantvalleyconservancy.org.

BY DENISE THORNTON



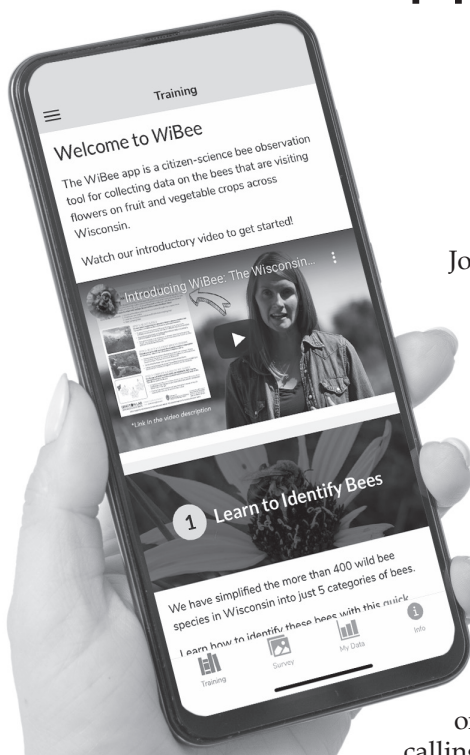
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WiBee: Community Science with the Wisconsin Wild Bee App

**Saturday, May 14
10am - 12pm
Prairie Spirit Farm
1811 Spring Rose Rd.
Verona, WI**

Join UW-Madison Entomology Professor Claudio Gratton to learn about Wisconsin's diversity of bees, what they do, and how we can improve their environment and aid in their conservation. The session will also introduce you to a Wisconsin-based community science project called "WiBee" (we-bee), where through the use of a simple smartphone app you can learn to observe bees and collect data that will be used to better understand their abundance and patterns. Weather permitting, we will go outside and make bee observations and use WiBee.

Group size is limited. Please register online at bluemounds.org/events or by calling 608-609-0349.



BMAP Summer Tours

Come meet other BMAP members and learn about their restoration and management experiences!

Throughout the summer we'll tour three different members' properties, see their restoration challenges and successes, and talk about all things land stewardship. All tours begin at 10:00 am. You can register to attend on the BMAP website (www.bluemounds.org). Please email questions to lindamillunzijones@gmail.com or leave a message on the BMAP office phone (608-571-4501).

**Saturday, June 11
10am - 12pm**

**Stephen Fabos and April Prusia
W8707 Sawmill Rd.
Blanchardville, WI**

Stephen Fabos and April Prusia's property is known as Dorothy's Range. It is 78 acres of mostly upland prairie/oak savanna. There is also a small sedge meadow with the headwaters of a cold water stream. Fabos and Prusia have done extensive restoration work on the property since 2005, and the property is a good example of prairie restoration done exclusively with burning and inter-seeding with no wide spread chemical kill of existing cool season grasses. Fabos and Prusia have completed three different US Fish & Wildlife projects, two projects funded by the WI Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) and a few projects funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS). Expect to see a variety of upland grassland birds and early summer blooms of native flora.

**Saturday, July 9
10am - 12pm**

**Tracey and Scott Gross
5260 County Road T
Ridgeway, WI**

Tracey and Scott Gross's property features a cold-water stream that flows from south to north on the eastern property boundary and separates a spruce and evergreen planting from the larger property. In the past three years, the bottomland was cleared of large stands of boxelder, honeysuckle, and buckthorn resulting in the reemergence of wet prairie and sedge species. Three acres within the toe slope between the woodland and bottomland have been prepped and seeded for prairie. Future projects include controlling invasive plants in the bottomland and prairie as well as beginning management and restoration of woodlands.

**Saturday, August 27
10am - 12pm**

**Frank Sandner and Caroline Beckett
5452 Highway K
Blue Mounds, WI 53517**

Frank Sandner and Caroline Beckett steward their 66-acre property that supports oak woodland, prairie, and a pasture-to-prairie conversion. Working with WDNR, Sandner and Beckett have established pollinator- and wildlife-friendly prairie areas and converted their woods to habitat for woodland critters and plants. Burning, brush clearing and some carefully-applied spraying and mowing are on-going techniques. Each year brings new surprises! A wooded section of mostly buckthorn was cleared this spring; half of the work was done by machines—a woods mower on a bobcat—and half by a crew armed with chainsaws and sprayers. Sandner and Beckett look forward to seeing what this area is like in August!

Attendants at the 2021 tour at Lynn and Jane Knutson's property.



Brooke Lewis

Join the *Work Party!*

The old adage “many hands make light work” is true when it comes to land management activities. BMAP work parties, introduced in our last newsletter, are on track to begin in May and we hope you’ll join us!

The benefits of these two or three-hour work parties are both practical and social, allowing BMAP members to get to know each other better while being productive doing work to improve the health of the landscape. There are two different ways to participate: as a host, asking other members to help you with work on your land, or as a volunteer, joining another member to help with work on their land. For those that host a work party on their property, our hope is that the effort received from others will be reciprocated through participation in others’ work parties during the season.

The work party page on the BMAP website (bluemounds.org) includes an opportunity to join the work party email list, sign-up to host a work party, and RSVP to join a scheduled work party as a volunteer. The inaugural work parties are already listed on the website, and two additional ones are in the works so check back for updates. The event descriptions on the website will include details on what work will be accomplished, tools to bring along and host contact information. Please RSVP on the website or by phone to the coordinator (phone number listed below) to join a work party so the host knows how many helpers to expect. 🌍

- Visit the BMAP website to RSVP to participate in a work party, sign-up to host your own event, or to learn more about work parties, including reading the FAQ page with more details. If you still have questions, please contact Volunteer BMAP Work Party Coordinator, Tom Broman, at thbroman@hotmail.com or (608) 437-9140.

Saturday, April 16
1:30-3:30 pm

Tom Broman and Lynn
Nyhart’s property,
2080 Sandy Rock Road,
Barneveld
Cut prickly ash, multiflora
rose and other prairie
invasives.

Saturday, May 28
9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Brooke Lewis’s property,
8125 Sweeny Road,
Barneveld
Scout for and pull garlic
mustard in a sloping
woodland unit.

BMAP Annual Picnic and Bur Oak Award Presentation

**Saturday,
September 10**
Time TBD

Join BMAP members from across south central WI to celebrate another successful year of stewardship. We’ll begin with a short overview of BMAP’s accomplishments and future vision before honoring this year’s BMAP Bur Oak Award recipients. Brats, beer and water will be provided; please bring a dish to pass. 🌍



- To help us plan our grill and beverage needs, please RSVP on our website (bluemounds.org/events) or leave a message on the BMAP phone: (608) 571-4501.



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BMAP ONLINE

www.bluemounds.org

eBULLETIN

BMAP's monthly eBulletin for announcements, habitat restoration tips, and more:

bluemounds.org/ebulletin.html



- BMAP's Facebook page for events and environmental news:
facebook.com/BMAPcommunity
- BMAP's Facebook group for sharing photos, ideas, and activities:
facebook.com/groups/BMAPcommunity

OUR MISSION

The Blue Mounds Area Project is a community-based organization that seeks to inspire, inform, and empower private landowners in the southwestern Wisconsin region to enjoy, protect, and restore native biodiversity and ecosystem health.

OUR OBJECTIVES

1. Promote understanding, appreciation and conservation of native woodlands, prairies, wetlands and savannas and their special species in an economically viable manner, through community outreach programs and private contacts.
2. Act as a clearing house for information from people and organizations involved in preserving native biodiversity including information about plant, animal and habitat identification, management, restoration, seed sources, native plant nurseries and invasive, nonnative species.
3. Encourage cooperative volunteer restoration and management activities.
4. Identify public and private land use changes that may affect ecosystem health and promote community-based stewardship of the unique natural heritage of the Blue Mounds and the southwestern region of Wisconsin.



BMAP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greg Jones, President

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Micah Kloppenburg, Ecologist
ecologist@bluemounds.org

Interested in volunteering with the Blue Mounds Area Project?
Contact us at: info@bluemounds.org
608-571-4501

BLUE MOUNDS AREA PROJECT MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Membership Status:

☐ Renewal ☐ New Member ☐ Gift Membership for: _____

Membership Level:

☐ Basic \$40 ☐ Contributor \$70 ☐ Supporter \$100 ☐ Lifetime \$1000

☐ Additional donation beyond your annual membership: _____ TOTAL MEMBERSHIP / DONATION: _____

Make checks payable and return to: Blue Mounds Area Project, PO Box 332, Mount Horeb, WI 53572
or you can contribute online at <https://www.bluemounds.org/donor-form>

☐ YES, I would like to receive information about site visits. ☐ I'm interested in volunteer opportunities with BMAP.

Thank you! Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



BMAP
BLUE MOUNDS AREA PROJECT

P.O. Box 332
Mt. Horeb, WI 53572

**“He who owns a bur oak owns more than
a tree. He owns a historical library and a
reserved seat in the theater of evolution.”**

-Aldo Leopold

Unsplash

BMAPNEWS

The Blue Mounds Area Project Newsletter is published three times yearly.

We welcome your comments, submissions, and advertisements.

Newsletter editor: Jenn Chakravorty (newsletter@bluemound.org) Graphic Design: Tom Senatori

www.bluemounds.org

IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP UP TO DATE?

BMAP maintains a calendar year membership cycle. If you are receiving a complimentary copy of the newsletter, please consider becoming a member.